

Historic Homestead Act Coming to Nebraska

Four pages, 4 million claims and America was forever changed. The four pages which make up the [Homestead Act of 1862](#) will be on display at Homestead National Monument from April 25 through May 28, 2012. When not on display this document is housed at the [National Archives](#) in Washington, D.C.

The Homestead Act of 1862 is considered one of the 100 most important documents in the National Archives which houses 10 billion paper records, 30 million photographs and close to 3 million maps and charts, all stored in more than 30 buildings around the country. "The Homestead Act was selected as one of 100 milestone documents as part of the [Our Documents](#) project because of its influence on the course of U.S. history. These documents helped shape the national character, and they reflect our diversity, our unity, and our commitment as a nation to continue our work toward forming 'a more perfect union' according to Lee Ann Potter of the Education Division of the National Archives.

"During the 150th commemoration we thought it was important to share the document which is at the heart of the story we share with every visitor to Homestead National Monument of America," said Superintendent Mark Engler. Four million people filed for free land under the Homestead Act of 1862 and America gave away nearly 10 percent of its land mass from January 1, 1863 through 1976 in the lower 48 states and 1986 in Alaska. Today it is estimated that 92 million Americans are descendants of homesteaders.

Jason Jurgena, the curator at Homestead, has been preparing for the document's arrival since early in 2011. "It is a rare opportunity to see a document that had such an important impact on this country," said Jurgena.

"The National Archives is pleased to cooperate with the Homestead National Monument through its longstanding loan program. This program enables thousands who might not otherwise have the chance to see such an example of our national experience" said Jim Zeender, the Senior Registrar at the National Archives.

The historic document, signed by President Abraham Lincoln, will be on view at the Heritage Center. Like all other park programs and activities, viewing this one of a kind document will be free of charge. Groups of 15 or more are encouraged to make reservations.

Remember, Homestead National Monument of America has an exciting schedule of events planned for 2011. Keep up with the latest information by following us on Twitter (HomesteadNM) and Facebook (Homestead National Monument of America). You can also stop out to get a schedule of events. For information on the Monument's programs or activities, please call (402) 223-3514 or visit www.nps.gov/home.

Homestead National Monument of America is a unit of the National Park Service located four miles west of Beatrice, Nebraska. Current hours of operation are 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. daily.

Admission is free of charge. For additional information, please call 402-223-3514 or visit www.nps.gov/home .